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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Promotion of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 70/152, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly, at its seventy-second session, a comprehensive report on the promotion of equitable geographical distribution of the membership of the human rights treaty bodies. The present report, submitted in response to that request, provides information on the system for the election of treaty body members and an analysis of the membership of each treaty body, by geographical region, as at 1 January 2017.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 70/152, the General Assembly encouraged States parties to the United Nations human rights instruments to consider and to adopt concrete actions, inter alia, the possible establishment of quotas by geographical region for membership of the treaty bodies, thereby ensuring the paramount objective of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of those human rights bodies. The Assembly recommended, when considering the possible allocation of seats on each treaty body on a regional basis, the introduction of flexible procedures that would encompass the following criteria:

(a) Each of the five regional groups established by the Assembly is allocated seats on each treaty body in equivalent proportion to the number of States parties to the instrument in that group;

(b) There must be provision for periodic revisions of the allocation of seats in order to reflect the relative changes in the level of treaty ratification in each regional group;

(c) Automatic periodic revisions should be envisaged in order to avoid amending the text of the instrument when the quotas are revised.

2. The General Assembly stressed that the process needed to achieve the goal of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of human rights treaty bodies could contribute to raising awareness of the importance of gender balance, the representation of the principal legal systems and the principle that the members of the treaty bodies should be elected and should serve in their personal capacity, and should be of high moral character, acknowledged impartiality and recognized competence in the field of human rights.

3. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to submit to the Assembly, at its seventy-second session, a comprehensive updated report, including information on any steps taken by States parties to the United Nations human rights instruments, at their meetings or conferences, to address the matter of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies, as well as specific recommendations on the implementation of resolution 70/152.

4. The present report, submitted in response to that request, provides an analysis of the composition of the membership of the human rights treaty bodies as at 1 January 2017.[1]

II. Human rights treaty bodies

5. Nine core international human rights treaties and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment provide for the creation of a committee of experts to carry out the functions delineated in the treaty and, where relevant, its optional protocols. Accordingly:

[1] Elections of members of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee against Torture have taken place since January 2017; the results of those elections are not reflected in the calculations presented herein.

(a) The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, established under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, began work in 1970;

(b) The Human Rights Committee, established under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, began work in 1977 and is invested with functions by the Covenant and its two Optional Protocols;

(c) The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, began work in 1982 and is invested with functions by the Convention and its Optional Protocol;

(d) The Committee against Torture, established under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, began work in 1987;

(e) The Committee on the Rights of the Child, which began work in 1991, oversees implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its three Optional Protocols;

(f) The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, established under the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, began work in 2004;

(g) The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, established under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, began work in 2007;

(h) The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, established under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, which began work in 2009, is invested with functions by the Convention and its Optional Protocol;

(i) The Committee on Enforced Disappearances, established under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, began work in 2011;

(j) The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights does not provide for the creation of a treaty body, but gives the Economic and Social Council a general mandate to oversee the implementation of the Covenant by States parties and the specialized agencies through the consideration of reports. In 1978, the Council created the Sessional Working Group of Governmental Experts on the implementation of the Covenant to assist it in considering the reports submitted by States parties (Council decision 1978/10), the composition of which was amended by the Council in 1985 (Council resolution 1985/17), and it was renamed the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Committee, which is treated as a treaty body, first met in 1987. Subsequently, the Human Rights Council has called for the regularization of the Committee so that its establishment is consistent with other treaty bodies (Human Rights Council resolution 4/7).

III. Election of members of the human rights treaty bodies

6. With the exception of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, whose elections are governed under the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17, the elections of members of treaty bodies are governed by the provisions set out in each treaty (article 8, International Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; articles 28-34, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; article 17, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; article 17, Convention against Torture; article 43, Convention on the Rights of the Child; article 72, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; articles 5-9, Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture; article 34, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and article 26, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance).

7. In accordance with those provisions, each committee is composed of independent experts, ranging in number from 10 to 25, with provisions for an expansion of the membership being included in several treaties (up to a maximum of 14 under article 72 (1)(b) of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; up to a maximum of 25 under article 5 (1) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture; and up to a maximum of 18 under article 34 (2) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

8. To nominate or elect a member of a treaty body, a State must be a party to the treaty concerned (with the exception of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, where the election process is conducted under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council). Experts are nominated and elected by States parties to the treaty concerned by secret ballot. They serve for four-year terms and, except in the case of the newer treaty bodies, mainly the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which allow for the renomination of members only once, the treaties do not limit the number of times a member's term may be renewed. With the exception of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which allow for the nomination of two candidates by each State party, all treaties limit the number of nominees to one. Candidates must be nationals of the nominating State party, except in the case of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which entitles States parties, in nominating two candidates, to nominate a candidate who is a national of another State party: before it nominates a national of another State party, the nominating State must obtain the consent of the other State party (article 6).

9. Where the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is concerned, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1985/17, provides that the Committee is to consist of 18 members elected by the Council by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States parties to the Covenant. With regard to the composition of the Committee, the resolution stipulates that due consideration must be given to equitable geographical distribution and to the representation of different forms of social and legal systems. Accordingly, 15 seats on the Committee are distributed on the basis of regional groups and 3 seats are allocated in accordance with the increase in the total number of States parties per regional group. Members serve for four-year terms and are eligible for re-election if nominated. The elections of members in respect of all other treaty bodies are held at biennial meetings of the States parties, or in the case of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, at a conference of States parties to the Convention. In all cases, to avoid a change of the entire membership, the terms of half of the members elected at the first election are limited to two years, following which elections occur every two years.

10. On 9 April 2014, the General Assembly adopted resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system. In paragraph 13, the Assembly encouraged States parties, in the

election of treaty body experts, to give due consideration, as stipulated in the relevant human rights instruments, to equitable geographical distribution, the representation of the different forms of civilization and the principal legal systems, balanced gender representation and the participation of experts with disabilities in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies.

A. Qualifications for nomination as members

11. The qualifications expected of nominees, set out in the human rights treaties and in Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17, vary. In general, members are required to be of recognized competence and of high moral standing and acknowledged impartiality. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also indicates that consideration should be given to the usefulness of the participation of some persons having legal experience (article 28 (2)), while the Convention against Torture provides that, in nominating candidates, States parties should bear in mind the usefulness of nominating persons who are also members of the Human Rights Committee and who are willing to serve on the Committee against Torture (article 17 (2)). The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture indicates that members should have proven professional experience in the field of the administration of justice, in particular criminal law, prison or police administration, or in the various fields relevant to persons deprived of their liberty (article 5 (2)). In the case of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, States parties are invited to give due consideration to article 4 (3) when nominating candidates (article 34 (3)). This requires States parties to closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the Convention and other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities. All treaties and Council resolution 1985/17 indicate that members should serve in a personal capacity.

B. Criteria for election of members

12. The treaties and Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17 provide criteria for States in the election of members of treaty bodies. With regard to the question of geographical balance, while consideration must be given to equitable geographical distribution in all cases, there is no formal quota, except in the case of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, where Council resolution 1985/17 establishes a formula for ensuring balance. Additional considerations include representation of the principal legal systems (the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities); the different forms of social and legal systems (the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights); the different forms of civilization (the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities); the different forms of civilization and legal systems of the States parties (the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture); and legal experience (the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture).

13. The newer treaties contain explicit provisions relating to gender balance. Thus, in the composition of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, due consideration is to be given to balanced gender representation on the basis of the principles of

equality and non-discrimination (article 5 (4)). Where the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is concerned, States parties are also required to give consideration to balanced gender representation and the participation of experts with disabilities. The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance also requires due consideration to be given to balanced gender representation (article 26 (1)).

14. Allocation of membership on a regional basis applies only in the case of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, with Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17 providing that 15 seats on the Committee will be distributed equally among the regional groups, while the additional 3 seats will be allocated in accordance with the increase in the total number of States parties per regional group.

C. Replacement of members

15. All treaties contain provision for the replacement of any members who resign or die before the end of their term. In most cases, the State party that nominated the former member appoints another expert from among its nationals to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term, subject in certain cases to the approval of the relevant treaty body: the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on Migrant Workers. In the case of the Committee against Torture, this is subject to the approval of other States parties. Although replacement in such cases has no impact on the existing geographical distribution of the committee concerned, article 34 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights requires that vacancies on the Human Rights Committee result in a new round of nominations and elections, provided that at least six months remain before the expiration of the term of the member. Although that may result in a change in the geographical composition of the Committee, in practice, the nationality of the member has changed only once on the occasions when members of the Committee have been replaced, with the replacement being from the same region as that of the original member.

IV. Five regions

16. According to a list compiled on the basis of the practice of States in elections at the General Assembly (see annex), the current composition of the regions recognized by the Assembly is as follows:

Table 1
Current composition of the regions recognized by the General Assembly

African States	54
Asia-Pacific States	54
Eastern European States	23
Latin American and Caribbean States	33
Western European and other States	29
Total	**193**

17. The practice of some States differs for the purposes of elections and for other functions. For example, for the purpose of elections, Turkey votes with the Western

European and other States, although it is also a member of the Asia-Pacific States. The United States of America is not a member of any regional group, but attends meetings of the Western European and other States Group as an observer and is considered to be a member of that group for electoral purposes.

18. The Cook Islands, the Holy See, Niue and the State of Palestine are parties to one or more of the treaties, but are not States Members of the United Nations.

V. Geographical distribution

19. Currently, 172 individual experts from 85 countries are serving as members of the treaty bodies. The membership of each treaty body varies, ranging from 10 to 25 (see table 2).

Table 2
Membership of human rights treaty bodies

Committee	*Membership*
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	18
Human Rights Committee	18
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	18
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	23
Committee against Torture	10
Committee on the Rights of the Child	18
Committee on Migrant Workers	14
Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture	25
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	18
Committee on Enforced Disappearances	10
Total	**172**

A. Current status of geographical distribution of membership of treaty bodies

20. With regard to the current status of the geographical distribution of the membership of the human rights treaty bodies, the Western European and other States and the African States, each of which has 44 members (26 per cent), are the largest, followed by the Asia-Pacific States, with 32 members (18 per cent); the Latin American and Caribbean States, with 28 members (16 per cent); and the Eastern European States, with 24 members (14 per cent) (see table 3).

21. Relative to the level of treaty ratification by States per region, the Asia-Pacific States and the African States are underrepresented, while the Western European and other States are overrepresented (see table 3).

Table 3
Geographical distribution of membership of treaty bodies

States	*Number of members (percentage)*		*Number of ratifications (percentage)*	
African	44	(26)	407	(29)
Asia-Pacific	32	(18)	317	(22)
Eastern European	24	(14)	197	(14)
Latin American and Caribbean	28	(16)	250	(18)
Western European and other	44	(26)	228	(16)
Non-member		–	14	(1)
Total	**172**	**(100.0)**	**1 413**	**(100.0)**

22. The geographical distribution of membership relative to the level of treaty ratification, when examined by committee, indicates the following (see table 4):

(a) Although the composition of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination shows a more balanced geographic distribution, the Eastern European States are underrepresented;

(b) In the case of the Human Rights Committee, the Asia-Pacific States remain far underrepresented, while the Western European and other States are strongly overrepresented;

(c) In the case of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the African States and the Asia-Pacific States are proportionately represented, while the Latin American and Caribbean States are slightly underrepresented compared with the Western European and other States relative to their proportion of ratifications;

(d) With regard to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, although the Western European and other States, the Asia-Pacific States and the African States have the same rate of representation, the Eastern European States and the Latin American and Caribbean States are underrepresented;

(e) Concerning the Committee against Torture, the Western European and other States are overrepresented, while the Eastern European States and the Latin American and Caribbean States are underrepresented;

(f) For the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the African States are far overrepresented and the Eastern European States and the Latin American and Caribbean States are underrepresented;

(g) In the case of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, the Asia-Pacific States and the African States are underrepresented and the Eastern European States overrepresented;

(h) For the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Latin American and Caribbean States are underrepresented relative to their proportion of ratifications and the Asia-Pacific States and the African States are overrepresented. At its seventeenth session, held from 20 March to 12 April 2017, the Committee adopted a statement in which it expressed concern about the shifting geographic balance on the Committee and called upon States parties to secure equal geographic representation in its membership;

(i) In the case of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the African States are not represented notwithstanding the high proportion of their ratification, while the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States are overrepresented relative to their proportion of ratifications.

Table 4
Ratifications and membership of each treaty body, by region, as at 1 January 2017

	Membership	*Ratification*
	Number (percentage)	
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination[a]		
Total: membership and ratifications	18	178
African	5 (28)	52 (29)
Asia-Pacific	3 (17)	39 (22)
Eastern European	1 (6)	23 (13)
Latin American and Caribbean	4 (22)	32 (18)
Western European and other	5 (28)	30 (17)
Non-member States	–	2 (1)
Human Rights Committee[b]		
Total: membership and ratifications	18	168
African	5 (28)	51 (30)
Asia-Pacific	1 (6)	36 (21)
Eastern European	2 (11)	22 (13)
Latin American and Caribbean	2 (11)	29 (17)
Western European and other	8 (44)	29 (17)
Non-member States	–	1 (1)
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights[c]		
Total: membership and ratifications	18	164
African	4 (22)	49 (30)
Asia-Pacific	4 (22)	35 (21)
Eastern European	3 (17)	23 (14)
Latin American and Caribbean	3 (17)	29 (18)
Western European and other	4 (22)	27 (16)
Non-member States	–	1 (1)
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women[d]		
Total: membership and ratifications	23	189
African	6 (26)	53 (28)
Asia-Pacific	6 (26)	51 (27)
Eastern European	2 (9)	22 (12)
Latin American and Caribbean	3 (13)	33 (17)
Western European and other	6 (26)	28 (15)
Non-member States	–	2 (1)
Committee against Torture[e]		
Total: membership and ratifications	10	160
African	2 (20)	47 (29)
Asia-Pacific	2 (20)	34 (21)
Eastern Europe	1 (10)	25 (16)
Latin American and Caribbean	1 (10)	23 (14)
Western European and other	4 (40)	29 (18)
Non-member States	–	2 (1)

	Membership	*Ratification*
	Number (percentage)	
Committee on the Rights of the Child[f]		
Total: membership and ratifications	18	196
African	7 (39)	54 (28)
Asia-Pacific	3 (17)	55 (28)
Eastern Europe	2 (11)	22 (11)
Latin American and Caribbean	2 (11)	33 (17)
Western European and other	4 (22)	28 (14)
Non-member States	–	4 (2)
Committee on Migrant Workers[g]		
Total: membership and ratifications	14	49
African	5 (36)	20 (41)
Asia-Pacific	3 (21)	7 (14)
Eastern European	1 (7)	3 (6)
Latin American and Caribbean	4 (29)	18 (37)
Western European and other	1 (7)	1 (2)
Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture[h]		
Total: membership and ratifications	25	83
African	5 (20)	21(25)
Asia-Pacific	3 (12)	9 (11)
Eastern European	7 (28)	19 (23)
Latin American and Caribbean	4 (16)	15 (18)
Western European and other	6 (24)	19 (23)
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[i]		
Total: membership and ratifications	18	172
African	5 (28)	47 (27)
Asia-Pacific	5 (28)	44 (26)
Eastern European	4 (22)	30 (17)
Latin American and Caribbean	1 (6)	23 (13)
Western European and other	3 (17)	26 (15)
Non-member States	–	2 (1)
Committee on Enforced Disappearances[j]		
Total: membership and ratifications	10	54
African	–	13 (24)
Asia-Pacific	2 (20)	7 (13)
Eastern European	1 (10)	8 (15)
Latin American and Caribbean	4 (40)	15 (28)
Western European and other	3 (30)	11 (20)

[a] Last election of members held on 22 June 2017.
[b] Next election of members to be held on 14 June 2018.
[c] Next election of members to be held in April 2018.
[d] Next election of members to be held on 29 June 2018.
[e] Next election of members to be held on 5 October 2017.
[f] Next election of members to be held in June 2018.
[g] Last election of members of the Committee on Migrant Workers held on 28 June 2017.
[h] Next election of members of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to be held in October 2018.
[i] Next election of members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to be held on 12 June 2018.
[j] Last election of members held on 20 June 2017.

B. Current gender balance in membership of treaty bodies

23. Just 75 of the 172 treaty body members (44 per cent) are women. Other than the members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, all of whom except one are female, only 53 treaty body members (30 per cent) are women and the membership of all the treaty bodies remains dominated by men (see table 5). The Committee on Enforced Disappearances (8 of 10 members are men), the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (17 of 18 members are men) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (22 of 23 members are women) have the highest rates of gender imbalance.

24. At its seventeenth session, held from 20 March to 12 April 2017, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern about the absence of gender parity and called upon States parties to include women with disabilities in future elections of the Committee in order to ensure gender balance.

Table 5
Gender composition of treaty bodies

		Female	*Male*
Committee	*Total*	*(percentage)*	
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	18	7 (39)	11 (61)
Human Rights Committee	18	8 (45)	10 (56)
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	18	5 (28)	13 (72)
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	23	22 (96)	1 (4)
Committee against Torture	10	4 (40)	6 (60)
Committee on the Rights of the Child	18	9 (50)	9 (50)
Committee on Migrant Workers	14	5 (36)	9 (64)
Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture	25	12 (48)	13 (52)
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	18	1 (6)	17 (94)
Committee on Enforced Disappearances	10	2 (20)	8 (80)
Total	**172**	**75 (44)**	**97 (56)**

Table 6
Evolution of number of women per Committee

	Number of women		
Committee	*2013*	*2015*	*2017*
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	3	4	7
Human Rights Committee	5	5	8
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	4	3	5
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	22	22	22
Committee against Torture	4	3	4
Committee on the Rights of the Child	11	9	9
Committee on Migrant Workers	4	3	5
Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture	8	13	12
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	7	6	1
Committee on Enforced Disappearances	1	2	2
Total	**69**	**70**	**75**

VI. Conclusions

25. **Under the terms of the nine core international human rights treaties and one optional protocol that establish treaty bodies, the modalities for the nomination and election of treaty body members are a matter for the States parties to those instruments. In respect of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the nomination of candidates for election is a matter for States parties, whereas election is a matter for the members of the Economic and Social Council, with geographical distribution being subject to Council resolution 1985/17. In that regard, and recalling the recommendation made in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 68/268, the Secretary-General recommends that the Council consider replacing the existing procedure for the election of experts to the Committee with a meeting of States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, while preserving the current structure, organization and administrative arrangement of the Committee, as set forth in Council resolution 1985/17.**

26. **The Secretary-General is concerned about the lack of equitable geographic distribution in the membership of most of the human rights treaty bodies, and wishes to draw attention to paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 68/268, in which the Assembly encouraged States parties, in the election of treaty body experts, to give due consideration, as stipulated in the relevant human rights instruments, to equitable geographical distribution, the representation of the different forms of civilization and the principal legal systems, balanced gender representation and the participation of experts with disabilities in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies. In that regard, the Secretary-General strongly recommends that States parties, individually and through meetings of States parties, step up efforts to achieve equitable geographical representation in the treaty bodies when nominating new members or re-electing existing members.**

27. **The Secretary-General is also concerned about the gender imbalance in the membership of the treaty bodies, in particular, in the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and strongly recommends that States parties ensure the equal representation of women and men in the human rights treaty body membership through their considerate nomination of candidates and voting.**

28. **In addition, the Secretary-General recommends that States parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which allows for each State party to nominate two candidates, take into consideration the principles of equitable geographical distribution and gender balance in nominating candidates for election to the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture.**

29. **The Secretary-General also recommends that the present report be forwarded to the Chairs of the meetings or conferences of States parties, as well as to the Economic and Social Council, for consideration at the next meetings of those forums, in particular, those organized to elect members of the treaty bodies.**

Annex

Regions established by the General Assembly

The statistics contained in the present report were calculated on the basis of the following regions established by the General Assembly:

African States (54 States)

Algeria
Angola
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cabo Verde
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo
Côte d'Ivoire
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Djibouti
Egypt
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania
Mauritius
Morocco
Mozambique
Namibia
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
Sao Tome and Principe
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Africa
South Sudan
Sudan
Swaziland
Togo
Tunisia
Uganda
United Republic of Tanzania
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Asia-Pacific States (54 States)

Afghanistan
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Bhutan
Brunei Darussalam
Cambodia
China
Cyprus
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Fiji
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Iraq
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kiribati
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Lebanon
Malaysia
Maldives
Marshall Islands
Micronesia (Federated States of)
Mongolia
Myanmar
Nauru
Nepal
Oman
Pakistan
Palau
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Qatar
Republic of Korea
Samoa
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
Solomon Islands
Sri Lanka
Syrian Arab Republic
Tajikistan
Thailand
Timor-Leste
Tonga
Turkmenistan
Tuvalu
United Arab Emirates
Uzbekistan
Vanuatu
Viet Nam
Yemen[a]

Eastern European States (23 States)

Albania
Armenia[b]
Azerbaijan[b]
Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina[c]
Bulgaria
Croatia[c]
Czechia[d]
Estonia[b]
Georgia[b]
Hungary
Latvia[b]
Lithuania[b]
Montenegro
Poland
Republic of Moldova[b]
Romania
Russian Federation[b]
Serbia[c]
Slovakia[d]
Slovenia[c]
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[c]
Ukraine

Latin American and Caribbean States (33 States)

Antigua and Barbuda
Argentina
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Cuba
Dominica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Grenada
Guatemala
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Jamaica
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago
Uruguay
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Western European and other States (29 States)

Andorra	Luxembourg
Australia	Malta
Austria	Monaco
Belgium	Netherlands
Canada	New Zealand
Denmark	Norway
Finland	Portugal
France	San Marino
Germany[e]	Spain
Greece	Sweden
Iceland	Switzerland
Ireland	Turkey
Israel	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Italy	United States of America
Liechtenstein	

Total: 193 Member States

States parties that are not members of the United Nations

Cook Islands[f]

Holy See[g]

Niue[f]

State of Palestine[h]

(Footnotes to the annex)

[a] On 22 May 1990, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen merged to form the Republic of Yemen. Between 6 April 1989 and 22 May 1990, both States were parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, resulting in an increase in the number of States parties from the Asia-Pacific States.

[b] The Russian Federation, as at 24 December 1991, maintained full responsibility for the rights and obligations of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics under the multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General. The territory that formerly constituted the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, entirely within the Eastern European States, is now represented by the Russian Federation and 12 other independent States, 7 within the Eastern European States (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Republic of Moldova) and 5 within the Asia-Pacific States (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). Belarus (as the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) and Ukraine (as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) were each founding members of the United Nations in their own right.

[c] The following States succeeded to the treaty rights and obligations with effect from the dates indicated previously undertaken by the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Herzegovina (6 March 1992), Croatia (8 October 1991), Serbia and Montenegro (27 April 1992), Slovenia (25 June 1991) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (17 September 1991). The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ceased to exist upon the independence of those five successor States. With regard to Serbia and Montenegro, subsequently, the National Assembly of the Republic of Montenegro adopted its declaration of independence on 3 June 2006, following the referendum on 21 May 2006, which was conducted pursuant to article 60 of the Constitutional Charter of Serbia and Montenegro. Montenegro was admitted to membership in the United Nations by General Assembly resolution 60/264 on 28 June 2006. The Republic of Serbia continued the membership of Serbia and Montenegro in the United Nations, including all organs and organizations of the United Nations system, on the basis of article 60 of the Constitutional Charter of Serbia and Montenegro, activated by the declaration of independence adopted by the National Assembly of Montenegro.

[d] Czechoslovakia ceased to exist on 1 January 1993, on which date the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as successor States to the former Czechoslovakia, considered themselves bound by the multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General to which Czechoslovakia was party. Both States are within the Eastern European States. Since 17 May 2016, "Czechia" has replaced "Czech Republic" as the short name used in the United Nations.

[e] The German Democratic Republic acceded to the Federal Republic of Germany on 3 October 1990, resulting in one fewer State within the Eastern European States.

[f] The Cook Islands and Niue are self-governing territories in free association with New Zealand. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was applied by New Zealand to the Cook Islands and Niue at the time of its ratification of the Convention, on 10 January 1985. The Secretary-General, as depositary of multilateral treaties, recognized the full treaty-making capacity of the Cook Islands in 1992 and of Niue in 1994. For the purpose of the present report, both States are included with the other Pacific States in the Asia-Pacific States, notwithstanding that New Zealand is part of the Western European and other States.

[g] The Holy See has observer status at the United Nations and is a party to three human rights conventions: the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is not a member of any group of States.

[h] On 29 November 2012, the General Assembly accorded Palestine non-member observer State status in the United Nations. On 2 April 2014, the State of Palestine deposited with the Secretary-General its instruments of accession to a number of international human rights treaties.